

HONORING NAPA VALLEY
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION**HON. MIKE THOMPSON**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 5, 2018

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Napa Valley Community Foundation (NVCF) for its commitment to helping our community during times of disaster.

Napa Valley Community Foundation was founded in 1994 and since then has distributed more than 50 million dollars to important causes in Napa Valley. For more than a decade it has spearheaded relief and recovery efforts following disasters and filled in the gaps to ensure residents received needed assistance. NVCF is a vital organization that has supported our community time and time again.

After the New Year's Flood on the Napa River in 2006, the earthquake in August 2014 and the October 2017 Wildfires, Napa Valley Community Foundation provided aid and funded services for those affected and displaced. Following these disasters and recoveries, NVCF developed best practices for short-term, intermediate-term and long-term disaster relief. To address the many needs of our community and the inevitable gaps in the recovery process, NVCF partners with nonprofits and donors to ensure financial resources are available where they are most needed. Additionally, Napa Valley Community Foundation partners with associations, businesses, individuals and government agencies to provide aid to our community.

Napa Valley Community Foundation manages the Napa Valley Community Disaster Relief Fund, which was established after the 2014 earthquake with a 10 million dollar lead gift from Napa Valley Vintners. The Fund raised an additional 15 million dollars after the October 2017 Wildfires, which greatly assisted local recovery efforts. Because of the Fund, 15,000 fire survivors received immediate relief services such as temporary shelter, meals and medical care; and over 2,000 workers, households and small businesses received direct financial aid.

Mr. Speaker, Napa Valley Community Foundation has been a lifeline to our community during times of disaster. It is therefore fitting and proper that we honor it here today.

CELEBRATING THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DOWNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA AND THE DOWNEY SYMPHONIC SOCIETY

HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 5, 2018

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Downey Symphony Orchestra and the Downey Symphonic Society on their six decades of broadening the cultural and educational horizons of the people of Downey, California, and beyond.

On October 20, 2018, the Downey Symphony Orchestra (DSO), directed and conducted by Sharon Lavery, commences its 60th season of concerts. The DSO has moved and

inspired generations of Downey residents, and many from surrounding communities, who would otherwise not have access to live symphonic music. The orchestra has fulfilled the hopes of its founders, a group of civic-minded citizens supported by civic and government leaders, who created the DSO in 1957 to help make Downey a more desirable place to live and to do business.

Since 1958, the non-profit Downey Symphonic Society (DSS) has sponsored the DSO and its educational outreach programs. The society is governed by a volunteer board of directors, who organize and publicize the DSO concerts; seek support from foundations and government entities; solicit donations from individuals, businesses, and service organizations; and promote the symphony. The DSS also enjoys the support of a very enthusiastic and active guild of over 200 members.

Each year, the DSO presents three subscription concerts in the Downey Theatre in the fall, winter, and spring. The orchestra reaches a larger audience in the summer at its annual free "Concert in the Park" in Furman Park. The summer concert emphasizes selections from musical theatre and films.

DSO programs are designed to appeal to a broad audience in terms of age, musical sophistication and taste, and ethnic and cultural background. In addition to the standard repertoire, programs include works by Latino and Spanish composers and by contemporary composers. The symphony has premiered and commissioned major works, including Oscar Navarro's "Downey Overture," which has been declared the city's "Official Symphonic Music"; Bryan Curt Kostors' "To Dust"; and Lars Clutterham's "Downey Celebration Suite."

The DSO and its members have also worked to promote music appreciation among our youth. In 1995, the previous DSO music director, Thomas Osborn, started the "Music in the Schools" program, which introduces students to all instruments and sections of the orchestra. Today, the program reaches almost 20,000 school children a year, including visits during winter and spring by a quintet of DSO musicians to the 13 public and four private elementary schools in Downey. Musicians present a sequential, multi-year curriculum on fundamentals of music, such as rhythm, melody, and style, and they perform specially arranged pieces. In addition, two full orchestral concerts are presented for school children at the Downey Theatre.

Major funding comes from the City of Downey, the Los Angeles County Performing Arts Commission, the Music Performance Trust Fund of the Musicians Union, the Downey Kiwanis Foundation, and the Downey Unified School District. In addition, the society's noble mission has been recognized in recent years with two grants from the National Endowment for the Arts. Thanks to the efforts of these supporters and others, the DSO is able to make its ticket prices more affordable and accessible for local residents.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to please join me in saluting the Downey Symphony Orchestra and the Downey Symphonic Society for providing 60 years of musical enjoyment to communities in my 40th Congressional District of California. Thanks to the continued work of these organizations, the people of Downey and beyond can look forward to many more music-filled years to come.

HONORING RICHARD ROMERO

HON. ADAM SMITH

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 5, 2018

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Seattle Credit Union's CEO, Richard Romero, for his work helping low income and immigrant families in and around Seattle.

Mr. Romero is an example of the American dream in practice. He and his mother immigrated to the United States from Peru when Mr. Romero was just four years old. He began kindergarten unable to speak English, but through perseverance, he received his Bachelors of Science in Organizational Management from La Verne University. Starting his career as a bank teller, Mr. Romero worked his way up through the banking system, and made a name for himself as Chief Operating Officer of the LA Firemen's Credit Union. Today, Mr. Romero serves as CEO of Seattle Credit Union (SCU) where he has led the cooperative to massive growth and expansion.

In his time as CEO, Mr. Romero has directed SCU according to the values of community engagement that he grew up with. Under his leadership, SCU has opened two new branches in low income neighborhoods, and begun to offer a variety of resources for immigrants and the underbanked. These resources include: a citizenship loan program and emergency financial planning information for immigrant families. Mr. Romero's empathetic approach to running a credit union has not gone unnoticed, as he was named Trailblazer CEO of the year by the Credit Union Times—an honor he has more than earned.

Mr. Romero's story serves as a reminder of the importance of perseverance and community involvement. Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor that I recognize the work that Mr. Romero, and the Seattle Credit Union have done for the Community.

CONSOLER-IN-CHIEF: MAYOR
MERLE AARON**HON. TED POE**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 5, 2018

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, Mayor Merle Aaron has faithfully served the folks of Humble since his election to Humble City Council in 2005 and his election to Mayor in 2015. My friend, Merle, is a well-respected businessman, devoted family man, and a passionate advocate for the citizens of Humble, Texas. His patriotic spirit, love for God, and love of the community make him a natural promoter of the Humble area.

Merle was the middle child in a family of five boys and four girls that grew up in Edinburg, Texas, near the Texas-Mexico border. He was the first in his family to graduate from Edinburg High School. He was working in construction when he met the love of his life and best friend, Linda. They moved their family up to Humble from the Lower Valley in the early 1960s, back when the Bush Intercontinental Airport was nothing but trees. Merle supervised the crew that poured the runways at